(b) The total annual production of tea and rubber in Assam during last five years is given below:—

Tea

Year	Production (M.Kgs.)
1993	410.43
1994	400.73
1995	402.62
1996	424.86(Estimated)
1997	425.43(Estimated)

Rubber

Year	Production (Tonnes)
1993-94	300
1994-95	320
1995-96	380
1996-97	1250
1997-98	2000(Provisional)

Teas are exported mainly in blended form either in bulk or in packet. In the process, origin of Tea is lost at the time of blending and hence export of Tea by origin of production cannot be identified. As such state-wise export statistics are not maintained. The export of Natural Rubber from India is insignificant.

(c) Tea Board provides financial support to the tea industry for undertaking the following activities:—

(a) Extension of tea area in the traditional tea growing regions.

(b) Uprooting and replanting/ replacement of old and uneconomic sections of tea.

(c) Rejuvenation Pruning and Consolidation through infilling.

(d) Improving irrigation and Drainage conditions.

(e) Development of small tea gardens.

(f) Extension of tea cultivation in the non-traditional areas.

(g) Stepping up of Research and Development Activities.

(h) Market Development and Export promotion.

(i) Augmenting processing capacity and modernizationoftheprocessingfactories.

Assistance under various developmental schemes covering the above acitivities is provided to all producers registered with the Tea Board. There are also special schemes applicable only to small growers having holding area upto 10.12 ha.

Announcement of a New Exim Policy

2784. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has announced a new Exim Policy;

(b) if so, what are the highlights of the policy;

(c) what are our commitments to World Trade Organisation;

(d) the manner in which the new policy fulfils these commitments;

(e) whether we have defaulted on several commitments to WTO; and

(f) if so, what are these areas?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Government has brought out a revised edition of the Exim Policy (1997—2002) incorporating amendments upto on 13th April, 1998. Major changes made in the Exim Policy are as follows:

1. Threshold limit for EPCG zero duty scheme for Electronics; Textiles, Leather, Gems & Jewellery, Sports goods and Food Processing sectors has been brought down from Rs. 20 Crore to Rs. 1 Crore. For Agricultural and Allied sectors, this limit under zero duty has been brought down from Rs. 5 Crore to Rs. 1 Crore.

2. Provision has been made in the EXIM Policy to enable the setting up of Private Bonded Warehouses which

would permit import and supply of even Negative List items for supply on payment of duty against specific licences and without payment of duty against Advance Licences.

3. Provisions have also been made in the EXIM Policy for setting up of Private Bonded Warehouses for exports. This would help such exporters especially overseas buyers to procure the goods from the domestic market from different manufacturers duty free.

4. Licensing functions have been decentralised extensively. All licences for negative list of imports/negative list of exports, advance licences approved by ALC, EPCG Licences approved by EPCG Committee at Headquarters/COS will henceforth be issued by Regional Licensing Authority. Power to grant extention in export obligation period and revalidation of advance licences has been fully decentralised.

5. Advance Licences with Actual User condition have been allowed based on Positive Value Addition only. Requirement of minimum Value Addition of 33% for this category of Advance Licences has been done away with.

6. Advance Licences to Export House/ Trading House/Start Trading House/ Super Star Trading House will henceforth be issued automatically. Deficiency, if any, shall be required to be complied with after issuance of the licence.

7. In the Agricultural and allied Sector EOU/EPZ Units have been permitted to be set up on the basis of positive Net Foreign Exchange earning only. Accordingly, for this sector, the requirement of minimum Net Foreign Exchange earning of 20% has been done away with.

8. Additional SIL will henceforth be given based on incremental exports as given below:

25—50% over preceding year: 1%
50—75% over preceding year: 2%
75—100% over preceding year: 3%
Over 100% over preceding year: 5%

(c) India has a number of obligations accruing from various Uruguay Round Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, General Agreement on Trade in Services, Agreement on Trade related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Agreement on Trade related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Agreement on agriculture, Agreement on textiles and clothing, Agreement on Import Licensing, Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing subsidies etc.

(d) The EXIM Policy is only one of the instruments being used by the Government to fulfill obligation under the Uruguay Round Agreement.

(e) and (f) India has been endeavoring to fulfil all the WTO obligations. This is an on-going exercise, being undertaken by a number of Ministries of the Government.

Non Payment of Wages

2785. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI.
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the workers of Tea Corporation of India are not getting their wages for a long time; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard and steps being taken to pay their wages?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Tea Trading Corporation of India (TTCI), a wholly owned subsidiary of State Trading Corporation (STC), is facing an acute financial crunch being a loss